


**FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
GENERAL ORDERS**

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TITLE	EFFECTIVE DATE
OFFSHORE PATROL VESSEL OPERATIONS	July 21, 2008
CHAPTER	PAGES
GENERAL ORDER 30	5
APPROVED	RESCINDS/AMENDS
	November 1, 2000 IPM 05-08

**1
POLICY**

- A** This General Order applies to *Endurance* class and *Intermediate* class vessels assigned to offshore patrol.
- B** The Division will establish procedures for securing Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) during inclement weather.
- C** The Division will establish procedures and provide guidance to members on the safe operation of Offshore Patrol Vessels to provide for effective public safety, fisheries and domestic security patrols.
 - (1)** To command an *Endurance* class Offshore Patrol Vessel, except in emergency situations, members must hold at least a United States Coast Guard (USCG) Captain's License (OUPV/ 6-pack).
 - (2)** The standard crew for an *Endurance* class OPV is three sworn members and the vessel captain. The minimum crew required for operation is two sworn members and the vessel captain.
 - (3)** OPVs may be equipped with an approved automatic weapon.
 - (4)** Boarding teams should have at least two members.
 - (5)** Vessel captains are Alternate Evidence Custodians.
 - (6)** The vessel captain will have the final decision for all actions regarding crew and vessel safety.
 - (7)** Crew members must follow the FWC Offshore Patrol Vessel Manual.
 - (8)** All safety, navigation equipment and vessel systems shall meet Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) standards, federal and state laws.

- (9) All OPV occupants shall wear an approved floatation device with an attached man-overboard (MOB) light when outside the enclosed cabin area when vessel is not moored.
- (10) All Offshore Patrol Vessels will be equipped with the following equipment at a minimum:
 - (a) Communications equipment to include, FWC radios, VHF radio, cellular phone, Satellite phone or other long range communications systems.
 - (b) Functioning navigational equipment to include, compass, charts (paper and/or electronic), GPS and radar. Endurance Class vessels should have a minimum of two independent radar, GPS, and compass systems (one magnetic compass and one flux gate compass is permissible). The minimum requirement for underway operations is one of each system.
 - (c) Emergency lights and siren.
 - (d) Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB).
 - (e) Inflatable offshore life raft capable of supporting Vessel Captain and crew.
 - (f) "Emergency Ditch Box" to include USCG-approved Visual Distress Signals (VDS), waterproof handheld VHF Marine Radio, first aid kit, and an emergency manual water desalination and filtration system.
 - (g) A current copy of USCG Navigational Rules.
 - (h) First aid and first responder equipment.
 - (i) Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) (Endurance Class only)
 - (j) Bilge dewatering capabilities
 - 1. A minimum of two (2) automatic bilge pumps positioned to allow pump out of all spaces. These pumps must be wired to function when the vessel's power is turned off.
 - 2. A minimum of one additional method (portable gasoline, 12 volt portable or genset driven/ powered pump) capable of pump out of all spaces.
 - 3. Endurance Class vehicles shall be equipped with audible and visual bilge alarms capable of dock-side alert when vessel is moored and unoccupied.
 - 4. Vessels that, by design, have inaccessible sealed hull spaces may be exempt from some dewatering requirements on a case-by-case basis as approved by the Offshore Patrol Fleet Coordinator.

D Definitions

- (1) **Endurance Class Offshore Patrol Boats** are those capable of extended patrol in offshore areas during varying weather conditions. The Endurance class fleet contains vessels from 42 to 85 feet in length. These vessels have berthing and support facilities and equipment to enable them to operate on multi-day missions without returning to port.
- (2) **Intermediate Class Offshore Patrol Boats** are larger than standard near shore patrol vessels around 32 feet in length. These vessels are capable of short-duration day patrols of offshore areas in varying weather conditions.

2 RESPONSIBILITIES

A Division

- (1) Ensure that the OPV captain and crew are trained in the proper operation and care of the Offshore Patrol Vessel and associated equipment.
- (2) Ensure that all required equipment is procured for and assigned to OPVs.

B Regional Commanders

- (1) Approve the storage locations for OPVs during hurricanes and other emergencies.
- (2) Ensure that Offshore Patrol Vessels are provided with required crew.

C Area Captains

- (1) Establish and maintain alternate boarding teams to conduct boarding operations from OPVs.
- (2) Resolve conflicts between the vessel captain's request for alternate crew members and patrol supervisor needs.

D Offshore Patrol Vessel Captain

- (1) Ensure the safe operation, readiness, and maintenance of the assigned Offshore Patrol Vessel and associated equipment.
- (2) Supervise the assigned crew.
- (3) Ensure that all laws, policies and procedures are followed.
- (4) Ensure that evidence is properly handled and stored in accordance with General Order 16.
- (5) Maintain required logs and document patrol activities.
- (6) Determine when approved automatic weapon should be mounted.
- (7) Ensure adequate supplies of food, fresh water, fuel, clothing, lines and other necessary supplies are on board prior to each mission.
- (8) Ensure all required equipment is checked for operational status prior to leaving the dock. All non-operational equipment shall be repaired or replaced as soon as practical.
- (9) Identify locations to secure OPV during hurricanes and other emergencies, and forward a written recommendation to the statewide offshore patrol fleet coordinator for comments, and the Regional Commander for approval. Original plans will be maintained in the Regional Office and a copy maintained aboard the Offshore Patrol Vessel.

E Offshore Patrol Fleet Coordinator

- (1) Coordinate and standardize equipment and operations between various offshore patrol vessels.
- (2) Provide recommendations and consulting services to command staff and vessel captains related to offshore fleet planning, operations, staffing, and maintenance.
- (3) Conduct operational readiness inspections of all offshore vessels as needed.
- (4) Plan and provide incident command and control for multi-vessel or extended deployment special details.

F Offshore Patrol Vessel crew and boarding teams

- (1) Follow procedures outlined in the FWC Offshore Patrol Vessel Manual.
- (2) Perform basic vessel maintenance and upkeep.
- (3) Operate auxiliary equipment and perform duties as an able seaman.
- (4) Stand watch.
- (5) Conduct search and rescue operations.
- (6) Enforce all applicable federal and state laws.
- (7) Assist federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.
- (8) Board vessels and complete boarding reports and other documentation as required.

A Boarding procedures

- (1) Notify the Communications Center of the location as well as the identity of the vessel to be boarded.
- (2) The boarding crew will wear Division-approved personal flotation devices.
- (3) Boarding crew members will always be in uniform and carry functioning portable radios for communication.
- (4) The boarding crew should immediately identify themselves as law enforcement officers to the boarded vessel's occupants and state the reason for boarding.
- (5) The boarding crew will maintain communications with the OPV Captain and apprise the vessel captain of their status during the boarding.
- (6) The boarding crew will conduct a complete written inspection prior to concluding the boarding.

B Securing large vessels during storm events

- (1) All circumstances must be considered when preparing to secure vessels in the path of a storm. Plans should be based on reasonable prudent mariner principles.
- (2) Possible short routes for escaping the storm's path will be identified and updated routinely based on forecasted track of the storm.
- (3) Long distance evacuation plans shall include crew transportation back to residence.
- (4) The vessel captain will have a contingency plan for checking the condition of the vessel as soon as weather conditions permit.
- (5) The vessel captain has the authority and ability to make sound maritime risk management decisions based on prevailing conditions.
- (6) Each vessel captain should coordinate a telephone conference call at least 72 hours prior to an anticipated storm landfall with the statewide OPV coordinator, Regional Commander, and appropriate Deputy Director for a final decision on where to secure the vessel.
- (7) Safe mooring locations in protected waters should be identified in advance, and agreements with entities that control these safe locations should be in place.
- (8) Basic mooring standards are prudent and should include, double line moorings, redundant safety lines for each mooring point, double/triple anchoring, and mooring point clean up.
- (9) A minimum of a 1" - 1.5 " Double Braid, or Triple Twist nylon line is required for use in securing vessels. Line will be vessel specific, double braid is preferred.
- (10) Each vessel captain will determine the line that is best suited for securing their assigned vessel.
- (11) The required line will be properly stored to protect the line from the elements.
- (12) Properly secured chaffing gear is mandatory.
- (13) The haul-out of a vessel should be considered as a **LAST OPTION**, and contractual arrangements will be made well in advance of a storm. If possible, and preferably by contract, the vendor performing the haul-out will be obligated to return the vessel to the water as soon as possible after the storm.

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FORMS

FWC/DLE-045

Incident Summary Report

FWC/DLE-045A

Incident Summary Report Narrative